SAMPLE SLAB UPDATE

33 – JANUARY 2024

THE NEWSLETTER FOR SAMPLE SLAB COLLECTORS.

Sample Slabs at FUN

I saw more samples for sale at the Florida United Numismatists January convention than at any other show by far. About 15 dealers had at least one sample in their case. One dealer, Eric Grimes of Cortez Coins, had half a case of samples, including the first International Grading Service sample I have seen in person. Most samples I saw on the bourse were priced at retail or higher. This is increasingly common, although samples do still occasionally appear for sale unattributed.

Ten years ago, most dealers didn't know what a sample slab was. Now everyone knows the term as this specialty moves to the edge of the numismatic mainstream. Vintage slab collecting is already mainstream, with countless collectors pursuing vintage holders or coins in vintage holders.

New samples at FUN included:

NGC 7th slab collector meetup (see next article).

NGC grading contest participant with 1991 Lithuania 5 centai. Free event where collectors had 10 minutes to grade 15 coins, striving to match the correct NGC grade.

NGC RoundTable Bash with 1998 Gambia 10 butus. Given at a networking event for this dealer trading group.

NGC promotional for Harlan J Berk World Numismatics with 1965 Great Britain Churchill crown.

Thank you to NGC for making these holders, especially for making the slab collector meeting holders on short notice.

Slab Collector Meetup at FUN

The January FUN Convention featured yet another slab collector meetup. The 7th overall and first at a FUN show, this was an informal gathering to talk over our interest, trade, and show & tell. Guests included PCGS co-founder Gordon Wrubel and early PCGS grade Mark Ferguson. Each attendee received a sample slab that NGC kindly made for the occasion.

As the number of slab collector meetups grows, a list could become useful. Meetups four through seven had gifts for attendees.

1. August 10, 2016. ANA World's Fair of Money, Anaheim. Lobby of Hilton Anaheim Convention Center. No gift.

2. August 3, 2017. ANA World's Fair of Money, Denver. Coffee. Dazbog Coffee in the Colorado Convention Center. No gift.

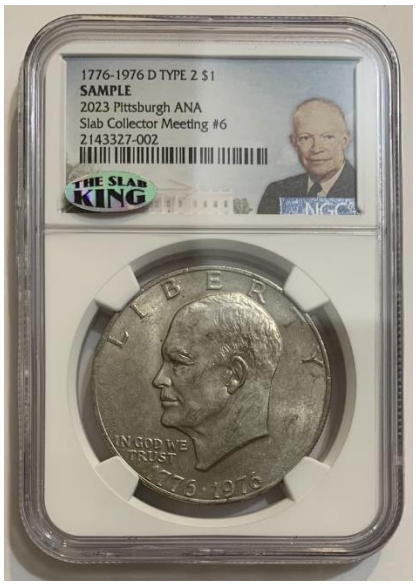
No meetup in 2018.

3. August 16, 2019. ANA World's Fair of Money, Rosemont. Lobby of Hyatt Rosemont. No gift.

No meetup in 2020 because the World's Fair of Money was cancelled that year.

4. August 12, 2021. ANA World's Fair of Money, Rosemont. Lobby of Hyatt Rosemont. Gift: Homemade slab using a Coin World holder and a no-date Buffalo nickel counterstamped "SS21." 20 made.

5. August 17, 2022. ANA World's Fair of Money, Rosemont. Lobby of Hyatt Rosemont. Gift: ANACS slab pedigreed to The Slab King with a variety of Wheat cents. 100 made. One of the 100 had a steel cent by accident.



6. August 10, 2023. ANA World's Fair of Money, Pittsburgh. Lobby of Westin Convention Center Pittsburgh. Gift: NGC slab with a 1976 Eisenhower dollar. 30 made. All 30 have a label error – the label reads the coins as D mint, but they're all P coins.

7. January 5, 2024. Winter FUN, Orlando. "Rocks" bar at Hyatt Regency Orlando. Gift: NGC slab with a 2018 Egypt pound. 50 made.

The meetup 5 ANACS slabs sold on eBay for $75+ a couple times. Curious what it would bring, I auctioned one meetup 7 holder on eBay, where it earned $66. As far as I know, none of the meetup 4 or 6 holders have traded hands publicly yet. No-one who attended a meetup has sold a gift, as far as I know – the sales have been leftover pieces.

Sample Slabs in the Market – a High Level Review

Guest article by Isaiah Hageman, The Slab King

David writes that samples are hot in the marketplace, and I absolutely agree with him. My experience at the Winter FUN show (as a dealer) was that samples were priced at retail and sales were brisk. On a personal side for samples, I acquired an 80 piece sample wholesale deal at the beginning of the show and it was all sold and gone within the hour. Sales online are also brisk, both on Facebook and eBay. I've seen a lot of extremely rare samples come up for sale in the past few weeks, all breaking previous records by miles. It's very good to see how many people are looking at sample slabs as the next hot market item. Whatnot is also helping the market with streamers buying samples in bulk to sell on their auction live shows.

Feel free to email me or text on Facebook Messenger about samples, I'm always around. Happy collecting!

Book News – Third Edition in Progress

The Sample Slabs third edition book is expected this year. Burton Strauss did the majority of the work, building a database with over 1,000 listings. This will be a major expansion of the 2016 second edition, including up to date pricing for every item.

The printed second edition is sold out. Get a PDF of the second edition by sending $9 PayPal to davidschwager@hotmail.com

Lakesammman sale

An eBay seller known as lakesammman has been listing top quality samples starting October 15, with sales ongoing. Highlights of this all-PCGS collection included.

PCGS eCollector that earned $660, shattering its $60 catalog value.

PCGS sample labeled as 1933 double eagle with empty holder that earned $1,178.

PCGS CU Forum Lunch Crew, the first luncheon slab, which I bought for $255.

PCGS 1964 Japan 100 yen green label sample for $320.

The Next Hot Slab – NGC Type 8.0

(Possibly the start of a series on vintage holders that could move from obscurity to popularity.)

This is my favorite sleeper holder and I have accumulated about a dozen. For four weeks in August – September 2000, the NGC label had the serial below the barcode instead of above. Also differed in that the serial was in a tiny font. Supposedly customers complained the typeface was too small to read and NGC soon changed to the more routine type 8.1 with the serial in the usual place over the barcode and a larger font. The serial placement and font were never used again.

As an added distinction, a few 8.0 holders are labeled T for toned coins or W for white coins. The W designation lasted for about

three years, but T was used only for the four weeks of the 8.0.

A type 8.0 can hide in plain sight. But once you recognize one, the rest pop out as a distinctive and unusual holder.

Search a major show for an 8.0 and you may find one or none. They are scarcer than the NGC type 2.0 / 2.1 holders that earn around $1,000. A little awareness and a catchy nickname (friends on Instagram call it The Ocho) could make this the next hot slab.

Buying and Selling

Buying

I always buy sample collections or better single slabs for inventory. For my own collection, I look for samples from obscure or unlisted grading services (such as AHCGS, CCCS, or Global), gold coin samples, and rarities from all services. I also buy Numex production slabs and NGC type 8.0 holders. davidschwager@hotmail.com or Instagram @schwagerdavid

Selling

No sale items this time, but I am preparing a sales list and I will be at the Long Beach Expo February 2 and 3 with a box of samples to sell. Please say hello if you see me, and feel free to contact me in advance – I like to meet fellow slab enthusiasts. I'm helping PCGS with a vintage slab and memorabilia display at table 524, so you may find me there.

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